

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

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Will Rogers called San Antonio one of four unique cities in the United States. Its uniqueness can be traced back to the city's founding and the confluence of cultures that forged a new community. Both separately and collectively, our indigenous and immigrant populations have put their stamp upon the city. It is evident today in our architecture, neighborhoods and celebrations. And it is infused into our way of doing business and quality of life. One might say that San Antonio has a long history of supporting and advancing a creative community. Making the most of this long and colorful history, The Cultural Collaborative reinforces San Antonio's authenticity and lays the groundwork for a vibrant and prosperous future.

"We need to foster the spirit and practice of enterprise in San Antonio."

Executive Committee member

What is the "Creative Economy"?

The creative economy includes the full range of the arts and culture: fine arts as well as popular, ethnic, commercial and design arts. It also includes cultural events, such as festivals and celebrations, concerts and dances in the parks, and the preservation of history and heritage. It encompasses all individuals, businesses and nonprofit organizations that directly or indirectly produce cultural products or services. Also, thinkers and doers trained, whether formally or informally, in specific cultural and artistic skills.

Creative individuals include visual artists, performing artists, designers, media artists, film makers, arts educators, craftspeople, architects, writers, production technicians, volunteers and others.

Creative businesses include advertising, marketing, architecture, design, digital media, music and dance clubs, art galleries, art-related retail stores, film production and post-production, art-related printing, live theatres, festivals, and others.

Creative nonprofits include all types of arts and cultural organizations, historical and heritage organizations, professional and volunteer associations, arts-related departments within a college or university, and others.

The Cultural Collaborative (TCC) is a plan for San Antonio's creative economy and for the entire community. This plan is innovative in planning for the entire spectrum of San Antonio's creative economy: its nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, its creative businesses, and its creative individuals. As TCC research documents, more than nine of ten San Antonians, of all backgrounds, participate in arts and cultural activities, and they naturally weave them throughout their personal and work lives. TCC is among the first plans of its type to recognize and support this integration. The plan encompasses not only the recognized arts institutions but also the equally vibrant undercurrent of cultural activity flowing throughout the community—nonprofit and commercial, professional and community-based, institutional and individual.

Planning meetings brought about many hours of discussion and lively exchange of ideas resulting in the development of a vision, goal and set of

objectives that describes the type of community that participants would like to strive towards and direct The Cultural Collaborative implementation.

Vision: *Because the creative expressions, both traditional and contemporary, of our diverse cultures and communities nourish us all, the people of San Antonio are committed to the expansion of resources, leadership, and infrastructure to support a healthy creative economy that benefits residents and visitors alike.*

Goal: *To support the growth and recognition of San Antonio's creative economy.*

Objectives: There are five objectives in support of the goal of TCC and the strategies of the plan are organized according to these five areas. Note that many of the strategies support more than one objective, and are cross-referenced at the end of each section in the body of the plan.

- Access: Provide greater access to the arts and culture to residents throughout San Antonio.
- Economic Development: Promote the economic growth of San Antonio's creative economy.
- Community Awareness: Increase community awareness of the role and value of all San Antonio's arts and culture.
- Authenticity and Creativity: Strengthen San Antonio's unique and diverse culture, heritage and architecture.
- Resources: Develop increased resources of all types.

Ensuring cultural equity is a fundamental value of The Cultural Collaborative, applying to all five of its objectives. Cultural equity is defined as an ongoing goal that includes the shared value of mutual respect for diverse cultures and the fair distribution of resources among cultural communities.

Cultural Planning Context in San Antonio

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San Antonio has a relatively diverse, young and poor population. These demographics suggest a focus on arts and cultural programs that reflect a multicultural population; free and low-cost programs; and arts education beginning at an early age. Compared to other major American cities, San Antonio's arts and cultural community is generally smaller and under-resourced, with a relatively high reliance on public dollars. This comparison, along with previous plans and studies, suggest that TCC focus on development of a new, dedicated revenue stream for the arts and culture; deferred maintenance of cultural facilities; and shared marketing. San Antonio's political realities suggest that implementation of TCC will require a dedicated and sustained advocacy effort.

"While it will come as no surprise that cultural groups have limited resources with which to accomplish their missions, the current situation is particularly grave."

Wolf, Keens & Co. Preplanning Study

*Objective: Greater Access**(Page 25)*

San Antonio is a city that values and participates in the arts and culture. According to the TCC public opinion survey (page 81), 93% of all residents participate in at least one cultural activity each year, 70% attend a church or neighborhood festival and 61% visit a museum or art gallery. Parents seek out cultural activities for their children—54% of households with children have a child participating in the arts outside of school. Nonetheless, increasing access to the arts and culture for all of San Antonio was a fundamental goal articulated by the community throughout the TCC planning process.

The objective of providing greater access to arts and cultural programs to residents throughout San Antonio encompasses the following strategies:

- Bringing the arts and culture to the neighborhoods by facilitating increased use of existing venues and programs throughout all geographic areas of the city.
- Making the arts and culture relevant to diverse cultures by focusing on the needs and interests of target populations and addressing other barriers to access, such as cost, transportation, time and information about available programs.
- Expanding arts and cultural education by addressing education on the policy level, and making existing arts and cultural resources more available to schools.
- Improving community-wide marketing to residents.

*Objective: Economic Development**(Page 37)*

TCC is founded in part on the observation that San Antonio's creative economy is an important yet under-recognized economic sector, and that the community as a whole will benefit from development of the sector. This is corroborated by the results of an economic impact study of San Antonio's creative industry conducted by Drs. Richard Butler and Mary Stefl of Trinity University, which show a total annual output exceeding \$1.2 billion and employment of almost 12,000 jobs. This means that San Antonio's creative industry has an economic impact comparable to other local industries currently targeted for economic development. Other regions of the U.S. include the sectors of broadcasting, publishing (including Internet publishing), printing and cable program distribution in the definition of the creative industry. With these sectors included in the economic impact study of San Antonio's creative industry, the total economic impact is raised to nearly \$3.5 billion with an employment of over 22,000 jobs.

"I am reluctant to promote cheap real estate and labor as a competitive advantage; many communities offer this. Our real advantage is the sense of community, history and tradition."

SATAI Executive

Economic development of San Antonio's creative economy includes the following strategies:

- Small business development adapted to meet the particular needs of the creative community, including a business incubator and business training.

- Workforce development, including creative training at all educational levels and professional development.
- Supporting creative individuals through technical assistance and artists fellowships.
- Developing or enhancing cultural districts throughout the city in areas such as the Houston Street area, South Flores, South Town, Guadalupe Street, the Deco District, Nagolitos Street, Midtown on Blanco, South Presa Street, and the Carver Community Cultural Center District.
- Expanding cultural and heritage tourism by creating a specific plan and program at the CVB.

Objective: Community Awareness

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Increasing community awareness of the arts and culture was a consistent, clear message from the community throughout the TCC process.

Participants commented on the extraordinary accomplishments and value of San Antonio's arts and cultural community, and their frustration that this

contribution is not better understood or supported by the public and by policy makers. This gap is a national phenomenon, not merely a San Antonio issue, which has prompted the creation of a national advocacy organization and a call for local advocacy programs.

"...young African Americans are not learning about their culture, just gangster rap—not blues, jazz, gospel or other art forms, and not about the accomplishments of San Antonio's own major Black artists."

Community Press meeting participant

Strategies for increasing community awareness include:

- Implementing an independent, long-term advocacy initiative to increase public understanding of the role and value of San Antonio's arts and culture.
- Ensuring cultural equity through adoption of a cultural equity policy.
- Increasing outreach to the community through technical assistance and targeted funding.

Objective: Authenticity and Creativity

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"No longer the sleepy little village of Western-movie fame or the military town that once boasted five bases, San Antonio is now known as a tourist destination. It is also a hot spot of contemporary art...."

Art in America, January 2002

TCC planning participants view San Antonio as engaged in a long-term struggle to define and preserve its authentic identity. They place great value on aspects of San Antonio's way of life and view culture and creativity as essential ingredients. Their experience of this authenticity is largely a cultural one, intimately linked to creativity, as well as heritage and tradition.

Strengthening San Antonio's unique and diverse culture involves the following strategies:

- Improving urban design through development of an urban design master plan that addresses civic aesthetics in new public and private development and promotes the successful integration of contemporary architecture into the cityscape.
- Improving the Public Art and Design Enhancement Program by developing a public art master plan that addresses issues such as vision, maintenance and structure.
- Many of the other strategies throughout the plan also serve to fulfill the objective of strengthening authentic identity and creativity.

Objective: Increased Resources

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San Antonio needs and supports increased resources for the arts and culture. Its creative community is now, and has been historically, under-funded and under-resourced. Increasing resources of all types was identified by planning participants as an objective, to “raise the bar” of support and reshape the ecology of resources for the creative community. Moreover,

“People are the source of the creative edge that technology and other industries require.”

*Dr. Richard Florida,
Finding Ways Conference
Keynote Speaker*

according to the TCC public opinion survey, San Antonians are willing to pay higher taxes for the arts and culture. Two out of three respondents (66%) indicated strong support for an initiative to generate tax revenue for arts support if it meant they would spend an additional \$5 per year in taxes; 58% strongly support an additional \$10. Moreover, at the levels of \$10 and \$5 in additional taxes per year, respondents who strongly favor an initiative outnumber those strongly against it by 3 to 1.

Increasing resources involves the following strategies:

- Generating new leadership by developing a temporary new arts and culture organization, The Cultural Collaborative (TCC), to oversee implementation of the plan and take the lead on advocacy.
- Increasing public funding by increasing City funding allocated to arts and culture, and developing a new, dedicated tax-based revenue stream through a joint tax initiative in collaboration with other community organizations.
- Supporting and working collaboratively with The Fund.
- Increasing private funding by convening funders around issues of community-wide importance.
- Addressing cultural facility needs by developing new capital funding programs and investigating the potential of adapting a cultural facility for a shared-use performing arts center.

Implementation

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TCC is a ten-year plan and it is likely that fulfilling some objectives will require the entire time period. However, it is anticipated that work can begin on each of the recommended strategies, in a priority order, during the first three years of the plan.

TCC is an evolving document that lays the foundation for sustaining and nurturing one of San Antonio's greatest assets—our creative economy and all that it represents. Implementation of this ambitious plan will demand the serious consideration of leadership, advocacy, priorities, structure and funding. One of the most critical aspects will be active involvement of all stakeholders: the entire community.